

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TUNIS 02594 301323Z

43

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AF-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 AID-20 IO-14 EUR-25 DRC-01 /159 W

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R 301200Z APR 74

FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5336

INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 2594

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, EG, LY, MO/ SY

SUBJ: TUNISIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S VIEWS ON CURRENT
SITUATION

1. IN COURSE OF MEETING APRIL 29, FOREIGN MINISTER
CHATTI EXPRESSED OPTIMISM CONCERNING MIDDLE EAST DEVELOP-
MENTS. HE FELT THAT SADAT HAD DEMONSTRATED CONSIDERABLE
FORESIGHT AND COURAGE IN AGREEING TO PEACE EFFORTS AND IN
MOVING CLOSER TO U.S. SADAT'S POLICY SHIFT AWAY FROM
USSR AND TOWARDS U.S. CAME AS NO SURPRISE TO HIM. HE
HAD SENSED THAT SADAT HAD LONG WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH
U.S. AND HAD JUMPTED AT OPPORTUNITY AFFORED HIM IN THIS
REGARD BY CURRENT U.S. PEACE-NEGOTIATING EFFORT.

2. CHATTI EXPRESSED VIEW THAT REPORTED WITHDRAWAL
OF LIBYAN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM EGYPT WOULD BE
WELCOMED BY SADAT. HE CLAIMED THAT SADAT HAS BEEN
FED UP WITH QADHAFI FOR SOME TIME, BUT CONTINUED LIBYAN
PAYMENTS TO EGYPT HAD SOMEWHAT LIMITED SADAT'S FREEDOM
OF MANEUVER. HOW, CONTINUED CHATTI, SADAT CAN TURN HIS
BACK COMPLETELY ON QADHAFI.

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PAGE 02 TUNIS 02594 301323Z

3. CHATTI THOUGHT THAT ASSAD WAS SERIOUS IN HIS DESIRE

FOR DISENGAGEMENT AND EVENTUAL PEACE SETTLEMENT. HOWEVER, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT RABIN GOVERNMENT IN ISRAEL WOULD NOT BE STRONG ENOUGH TO MAKE CONCESSIONS REQUIRED FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF FIRST STEP IN SYRIAN-IRAQI DISENGAGEMENT PROCESS.

4. CHATTI WELCOMED APPOINTMENT OF AHMETLBARAKI AS NEW MOROCCAN FOREIGN MINISTER. WHILE HE CONCEDED THAT FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER BENHIMA IS CAPABLE, HE CONSIDERED LARAKI A GOOD CHOICE. HE BASED HIS JUDGMENT ON PREVIOUS SERVICE AS TUNISIAN AMBASSADOR IN RABAT.

5. IN GENERAL, CHATTI CHARACTERIZED SITUATION IN MIDDLE EAST -- AT LEAST INSOFAR AS ARAB SIDE IS CONCERNED -- AS "NEVER MORE FAVORABLE FOR A SETTLEMENT".
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